

# Summarised inspection findings

**Riverside Primary School Nursery Class**

**Stirling Council**

**SEED No: 5725429**

**29 September 2017**

Attendance is generally in line with the national average. There have been no exclusions from school over the previous two years.

In February 2016, 14.8% per cent of P4 – P7 pupils were registered for free school meals. In September 2015, 14 per cent of pupils live in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2015, the school reported that 24 per cent of pupils had additional support needs

### **Key contextual information**

Riverside primary school is a non-denominational school in Stirling. The school includes three Gaelic Medium Education (GME) classes, an autism provision, fourteen English medium classes (EME) and morning and afternoon nursery classes. The school roll in September 2016 was 424. The nursery has provision for 32 children in the morning and 32 in the afternoon. There are 46 on the roll in the morning and 49 on the roll in the afternoon. 41 children access the input for Gaelic in the nursery. Throughout this report, the term ‘the school’ refers to all the above aspects of the school’s provision.

**1.3 Leadership of change - School****excellent****1.3 Leadership of change - Nursery****excellent**

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community*
  - *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
  - *Implementing improvement and change*
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- The school's shared vision is for everyone *to be the best you can (Dèan do dhìcheall)*. This vision statement, along with the values, was developed through meaningful discussions and consultation with children, parents and staff. The values of respect, fairness, honesty and kindness are tangible in all interactions across the school. Children have a very good understanding of the importance of reflecting these values in all that they do and set high expectations for themselves and others. Across the school, (nursery, GME, EME and autism provision) the vision and values shape daily life and the work being taken forward. This results in positive relationships and high aspirations within an inclusive learning environment where children thrive and grow as part of this supportive community.
  - Children across the school community are empowered to inform and lead change and improvement. They are an important part of the 'big SIP', working with the headteacher and deputy headteachers to shape the school improvement plan. This involves representatives from the pupil council, and other pupil groups, listening to the views of their peers, presenting these views to the improvement planning meetings and providing informed feedback to the classes. All children are involved in discussing school improvement work at the start of the school year. They are part of the regular reviews of the school improvement action planning work. They are also involved, as part of small groups, along with a teacher, in discussions with the senior leadership team (SLT). This is a useful evaluative activity bringing staff and pupils together to exchange views on aspects of learning. Children told us they feel their views are valued and used to inform changes.
  - The very strong and inspirational leadership provided by the headteacher ensures that Riverside school works as one strong community serving to do the very best for all the children. The headteacher is highly respected by all in the school community. She provides much valued support for staff, encouraging them to 'be the best they can', so they can support each and every child to make the best possible progress in his or her learning. Staff are encouraged to take on leadership roles and provided with opportunities to allow them to develop their professional expertise. The headteacher has high expectations of both staff and children and this contributes strongly to a climate of aspiration and ambition.

- The depute headteachers, along with the headteacher, provide highly effective leadership across all aspects of school life. They work very well together as a team and provide staff with encouragement and support to grow in confidence, enabling them to provide children with continuously improving learning experiences. They model and reinforce the school values as they fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- The School Improvement Plan for the current session clearly references the National Improvement Priorities and the quality indicators from HGIOS4? and HGIOELC?. The improvement plan is detailed in an overarching action plan which usefully describes key actions, the priority leader, milestone dates and an analysis of progress and impact. The priorities are tailored to have a focus which reflects the schools self-evaluation of the work required in Riverside. Staff working groups lead each priority.
- Staff use creative and innovative approaches to illustrate school improvement work. In the entrance, corridors and in learning spaces there are colourful and imaginative presentations of the work of the school. The School Improvement Wall contains useful information about the planned improvements and the various groups involved in the work. Photographs, diagrams and drawings are all used to illustrate in engaging ways, the school's journey to excellence. The role of children, and how they inform school improvement, is clearly featured. The very useful presentation of the improvement plan in a sketch note format serves as a strong visual representation of the improvement priorities and makes the plan accessible to all stakeholders.
- Staff across the school community work very well together to improve outcomes for children. They have shared ownership of the school improvement plan as a result of their opportunities to discuss and review the schools progress. They are all members of workgroups taking forward important aspects of the school improvement action plans and contribute to professional discussions informing the changes. Within these groups, teachers lead on key aspects of the work. This very effective leadership at all levels ensures the shared vision is fully realised, enabling everyone to be the best they can be.
- Leadership in the nursery is strongly embedded at all levels with practitioners taking full responsibility for aspects of the early years setting including leading and being involved in improvement plan priorities. An example of this would be reviewing transition arrangements. This effective distributed leadership has led directly to improvements in the quality of the service. There is a strong culture of reflection and collegiate professional learning within the setting. Practitioners are committed to improving their practice, supporting each other, pursuing additional qualifications and taking good account of current thinking in early learning and childcare to help them reflect on their professional learning needs. This has been enabled and strongly encouraged by the management team in both the setting and the school.
- Staff are highly committed to their own professional learning. Professional reading is encouraged and texts discussed. Three practitioners are currently undertaking professional enquiries which are informing the thinking and practice of staff and leading to improvements. Staff benefit from a professional review process which supports them to celebrate successes and set objectives for the coming year. Their professional review and development plans usefully include links to learning for school improvement and the GTCS professional standards. All staff have been involved in recent collegiate learning activities including nurture training, personalised support, reflective reading, implementing aspects of Developing the Young Workforce and supporting dialogue for moderation.

Learning support assistants have also undertaken appropriate learning to support children with additional learning needs. They regularly join the school staff training sessions. Teachers include an outward look in their work and share learning with colleagues from across schools and sectors.

- Parents are also part of the 'big SIP' and meet with senior leaders to discuss aspects of school improvement planning. Their views are regularly sought. The 'tickled pink' and 'green for growth' folders in the foyer encourage parents and other partners to contribute their views about what is working well and what might be improved.
- The school has a quality assurance calendar which outlines the evaluative work taken forward across the year. Activities include: analysis of pupil work; dialogue with pupils; attainment meetings; peer observation and formal shared classroom practice. This is planned in a careful and considered manner to ensure that it is manageable and leads to improvements. Class visits by senior leaders can include agreed action points from the last observation which are followed up through planning discussions and on subsequent lesson visits.
- The headteacher and depute headteachers successfully ensure that every child's progress in literacy and numeracy is carefully tracked. Information from standardised tests, along with classroom assessments and teachers' judgements, are used to inform and track expected progress. The senior leadership team have regular discussions with each class teacher, focussing on children's progress and discussing the most appropriate planned interventions. This focus on each and every child is leading to children across the school making very good progress in their learning. Individual Learning Records (ILRs) are owned by the children and provide information on their progress in literacy and numeracy which can be shared with parents.
- The school looks outward to learn and improve. Staff work in partnership with other schools in the Wallace Learning Community. A member of the school leadership team is now attending community planning partnership meetings. This further supports staff understanding of the social and economic context in which children and their families live. It allows for improvement planning which focuses on the needs of the children in Riverside. Staff are aware of the context in which each child lives, including the SIMD context.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment - School

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- *Learning and engagement*
- *Quality of teaching*
- *Effective use of assessment*
- *Planning, tracking and monitoring*

- There is a calm, positive and inclusive ethos across all parts of the school. The values of respect, fairness, honesty and kindness are fully realised and embedded in the daily life of the school. As a result, almost all children are motivated to learn and engage well in a range of learning experiences. Children are very proud of their school, their learning and their achievements. The stimulating and well-resourced learning environments support children to be independent in their learning and the positive ethos supports children to 'be the best they can'.
- In almost all lessons, children understand the purpose of their learning and are able to confidently talk about the skills and learning they are developing. Almost all children work well together in pairs and small groups. As a result, children provide effective support for each other which enables them to learn with and from their peers. Children are active participants in their own learning and as a result, have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Overall, learners' experiences are engaging, stimulating and build on children's interests. Lessons are well-differentiated to meet the needs of most learners. There is scope to ensure that learning is at the right level of challenge for all learners across the curriculum.
- Children are empowered to contribute very well to the life of the school and the community through a wide range of leadership roles. As a result of these planned opportunities, children achieve success in many areas of their learning. Children demonstrate confidence and responsibility in undertaking these roles. As a result of the strong focus on the development of employability skills, children can identify skills required for particular roles. They are gaining confidence in reflecting on how well they have developed these skills and where they can apply these in real-life contexts. Children clearly feel that they have a strong voice in their school and can discuss where they have been involved in bringing about improvements.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is very good. Teachers have very positive relationships with their learners and work well together to ensure that their teaching embodies the school values and vision. Lessons are very well planned and resourced. Children are encouraged to independently access resources to support them in their learning. Digital technologies are used well to support learning, for example, to carry out research and use digital recordings of instructions.

- During the course of teaching, instructions and explanations are clear. Teachers have worked together to improve the quality of learning intentions and success criteria to include a focus on skills. We would encourage them to continue to work collegiately to develop further this work. Overall, most teachers use questioning effectively to support children's thinking and to promote curiosity.
- As a result of careful assessment of children's progress, a range of interventions are planned to support individual and small group learning. These include additional support in writing, the 'Better in Numbers Group' and one-to-one phonics interventions. Senior leaders support this work well through releasing teaching staff for blocks of time to deliver specific interventions. Teachers make well timed interventions during lessons to provide support for individuals and groups. Oral and written feedback is provided for learners. There is scope for this to be of a consistently higher quality across all classes in the school to ensure that feedback supports learners to understand how to improve.
- Teachers use a range of assessments to monitor children's progress and plan next steps for individuals and groups. In addition, the whole-school assessment calendar outlines specific standardised assessments to be carried out. Staff meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss the progress of individual children. This provides opportunity to discuss a range of assessment evidence and plan any required interventions to ensure all children are making the best possible progress.
- Children are involved in assessing their own learning through regular opportunities for self and peer assessment. The fortnightly 'achievement afternoons' provide a focussed time for children to discuss their learning with their teacher and peers and reflect on their learning in their learning logs. As a result, children are taking increasing responsibility for improving their learning. Through the work linked to the employability skills progression, children are able to articulate confidently their strengths and improvement needs. Staff should continue to ensure that expectations of the language of reflection are consistently high at all stages across the school.
- Across the school year, teachers engage in a range of moderation activities which focus on discussing the quality of pupil work. This is helping teachers develop greater understanding of progression within Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. Teachers also work with colleagues across the learning community, for example through moderating evidence of writing. The school recognise that they now need to build on these approaches to moderation to ensure these evaluate all aspects of learning. This will continue to support staff to develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations. As part of this work, consideration could be given to moderating the holistic range of assessment information which demonstrates the application of learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- Teachers plan children's learning thoroughly across the curriculum. The school is proactive in engaging parents and partners to enhance learning experiences, for example, within focus weeks and to support individual class lessons. Children are involved in planning the direction of their learning, for example, planning their interdisciplinary learning with their teacher. They exercise personalisation and choice, in their choice of tasks, resources and how to share their learning.
- Through coherence in curricular planning and Individual Learning Records (ILRs), teachers have clear information on the progress of individual learners within literacy and

numeracy. As a result of this approach, children are clear about which level of learning they are working within. This helps them to understand where they are going next in their learning. For those children who require additional support with their learning, their progress is tracked well through planning and reviewing measurable targets within the staged intervention process.

- Staff track children's achievements within and beyond school. This enables them to identify children who may be missing opportunities and plan to include them. As a result, almost all children are involved in lunchtime and afterschool clubs.



## 2.2 Curriculum: theme 2: Learning Pathways

- The rationale for the Riverside curriculum is shaped by the shared values and the needs of the children. Very helpful progression pathways have been developed for each curriculum area. These provide frameworks for planning learning using, for example, targets at each curriculum level. Suggested resources, possible learning activities and useful links to websites are detailed to support teachers in their planning. The pathways are continually updated and there are plans to now include the National Benchmarks to support assessment work. This rich resource ensures that all teachers have a shared approach to planning and delivering the curriculum areas. The planning for each class is regularly discussed with the SLT to ensure that it provides appropriate learning and meets the needs of all children.
- Interdisciplinary learning (IDL) provides children with opportunities to apply their learning in new contexts. Useful mapping of experiences and outcomes in science and social subjects across possible IDL contexts supports teachers to plan progressive learning experiences for the children. Science learning is enhanced by children working in the Science Hub. This room has a useful range of resources which provides children with an environment for carrying out science investigations.
- There are clear progression pathways in place for all aspects of literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. These outline progression within Curriculum for Excellence levels from early to third level. These support teachers to build on prior learning. Teachers use these pathways well to plan for individual learners and groups.
- Learning within the literacy and English pathways is enhanced through partnerships with the local community, visiting authors and engagement in national programmes. Recent work to improve the quality of teaching in phonics and reflective reading approaches has improved the quality of the curriculum for learners. As planned, the school should review their programmes in line with the newly published National Benchmarks.
- There are clear curriculum pathways in numeracy and mathematics based on the experiences and outcomes and design principles from early to third level. These, along with flexible pathways, allow teachers to plan for individual needs to help to raise attainment. A clear focus on creativity and critical skills is evident in all aspects of the curriculum. Outdoor learning enhances children's experiences.

## 2.7 Partnerships: theme 3: Impact on learners – Parental Engagement Primary

- Parents tell us that they are encouraged to be involved fully in the life of the school and they speak very positively about the headteacher and all staff. They appreciate the visibility of senior leaders, the way in which senior leaders communicate with them and seek their views, and the welcoming, caring and inclusive ethos in the school. Parents tell us that they and their families are very well-supported by the school.
- There are many opportunities for all parents to be engaged in their children's learning. They receive regular, comprehensive reports, have ongoing dialogue with teachers, and are encouraged to comment on their children's learning through learning logs and homework. Parents and teachers work closely together to provide targeted support for children. Parents are also invited into the school to listen to their children talk about their learning and to take part in informative learning opportunities which teachers provide for them.
- Parents work closely with senior leaders, teachers and children to evaluate and plan ongoing school improvement. They also contribute to the school's work on developing children's employability skills. Many parents attended a recent focus week on employability and shared information with children about their jobs and the skills which are required for these jobs. Parents tell us that they feel valued as important partners in the life of the school.

## 2.1: Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion - School

excellent

This indicator reflects on the setting's or school's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
- *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
- *Inclusion and equality*

- This indicator of the school's work has several outstanding features. Wellbeing is of central importance to the school community. Children respond extremely well to staff's consistently strong approaches to ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion. As staff and children work and learn together in lessons and in activities beyond the classroom, including in the playground, their genuine respect, care and kindness towards each other is tangible. Children feel cared for and valued by their school community. Children can talk at length about the importance of their school values and their responsibility for enacting these. During the inspection, we found evidence of many strong examples of children's understanding of the importance of mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Almost all children demonstrate high levels of responsibility for aspects of their own wellbeing and that of their peers. This is evident in their positive attitudes to learning, high standards of behaviour, their contributions to school improvement and their often mature interactions with staff, partners and other children.
- Children are very proud of their school. They benefit greatly from staff who consistently maintain high expectations, model appropriate behaviour towards others and use praise and reward sensitively and with impact. As a result, almost all children take individual and collective responsibility for their learning and achievements. Consequently learner engagement is very high across the school and outcomes for children are continually improving. Almost all children are achieving skills which support them to maintain their wellbeing. As a result of the exemplary ethos and inclusive culture of the school, children feel empowered to lead their own learning and often provide a strong contribution to the wellbeing, learning and achievements of their peers. Examples of this include the very effective Peer Mediators, the Rocking Readers initiative, the Friends Club and the weekly healthy tuck-shop run by pupils and parents. Based on evidence provided by the school, there is a very high uptake of out-of-class clubs with almost three quarters of the school attending at least one club throughout the year.
- Commendably, no child has experienced exclusion from school over the previous two years and the school reports that there have been no incidents of racial bullying for many years. Other incidents of bullying are rare and well-managed by staff. Education Scotland pupil questionnaires show almost all feel safe, that staff treat them fairly and with respect, and that they are taught how to be healthy. Children in focus groups reported that they can confide in a trusted adult with personal worries or concerns, and that some teachers have 'worry boxes' to encourage confidential sharing of these. Staff know children and their families very well and this makes them well placed to meet their wellbeing needs. Children are very much considered as individuals whose rights and needs are respected. There are

many examples of children whose wellbeing, self-esteem and achievement have been significantly enhanced by the supportive approaches offered to them and their families.

- Almost all staff, including support staff, have received training in nurture principles and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) which they consistently apply to support all children. Children who experience barriers to their learning, such as anxiety or personal trauma, are supported and challenged through well-planned nurture approaches, including an informal breakfast club. Those who attend the nurture group increase their social skills and confidence. They work with others on activities which also strengthen their understanding of health and wellbeing. For example, learning to make a healthy snack and spending time outdoors gardening and playing games. In addition, there is evidence of improvement in their in-class learning through for example, their very good progress in writing.
- Across the school, most children have an awareness of the wellbeing indicators. Children on staged intervention and nurture programmes use the wellbeing wheel effectively to talk about their strengths and identify their support needs. The next stage will be to further extend children's use of the wellbeing indicators to involve all children in reviewing their own progress with these and identifying next steps.
- Children across the school are developing a range of practical food skills to be able to cook healthy meals and snacks. They can identify different skills required and have applied these in creating their own recipes for example, as part of the Harvest Challenge. For this challenge, each class was given a bag of surprise ingredients from donations of food which had been harvested from the fields and gardens of the local community.
- Children are knowledgeable about the need for regular physical activity and keen to support and encourage others to achieve the 60 minutes a day target. This is demonstrated by a group of children in the senior stages who run a weekly 'Commit to get fit' club for their P3 peers, and the kilometre club. A group of boys in P7 run a basketball club for younger children which is focused on encouraging positive, respectful behaviour towards others. Children in the upper stages have a very good understanding of the impacts of smoking and alcohol on the body and have developed skills to cope with peer pressure through drama. Through workshops delivered by NSPCC, children have a very good understanding of different forms of abuse and how to get help for themselves or others if needed. The school should continue to ensure that there is a clear progression pathway in health and wellbeing for children as they move through the school and on to secondary education.
- Across the school, staff and partners skilfully identify children's wellbeing and learning needs using a range of assessments. GIRFEC is at the core of how staff, often working with other agencies, support all children. Staff are well aware of their statutory duties in relation to supporting all learners. The school's approaches to meeting these are sound and often creative.
- Parents are well included in the life of the school and are extremely positive about the impact of the school's approaches on their children's lives. Partners working with the school to promote health and wellbeing are highly valued. Together with school staff and parents, they deliver high-quality support for the most vulnerable children and families which often results in improved outcomes. Partnership working includes a strong partnership with the catering providers. Children regularly contribute to the development of new menus by

tasting and giving their views on new dishes. Children would benefit further from this partnership with increased opportunities to explore careers in the food and drink industry.

- The school is an outstanding example of an inclusive learning environment. Children value the cultural and social diversity within their school. Whilst the majority of children learn in English medium classes, some children learn in Gaelic medium classes and others in the specialised autism provision. Children understand the reasons for differences in approaches. As a result of this inclusive climate, there is a strong sense of community and cohesion. Children and families, staff and parents all feel strong attachment and commitment to Riverside PS.
- At all stages, children demonstrate their increasing knowledge of equalities and the importance of this within their community and in the wider world. Many children articulate very well, and with maturity beyond their years, their commitment to equality and human rights. They demonstrate this daily in their acts of kindness and respect for others which are rightly celebrated, shared and further encouraged across the school community. An example of how staff achieve this creatively is the introduction of Kindness Elves and the Kindness Squad who reward acts of kindness. These approaches are very successful in motivating children who may occasionally find kindness, care and respect challenging concepts to demonstrate. Working together, children, staff, parents and partners have ensured that the school values are strongly embedded and visible in the behaviours and attitudes of all members of the school community.
- Overall, Riverside is a school where the values are completely embedded with integrity and authenticity across the life and work of the school. Through their consistent and persistent application of positive approaches to Getting it Right for Every Child, staff have very successfully created a community where the children themselves are very often the key leaders of ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion in their school. This is highly commendable.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
- *Attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
- *Equity for all learners*

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The school's approaches to raising attainment in literacy and English are resulting in almost all children making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Curriculum for Excellence attainment measured against national standards shows that by the end of P1, almost all children achieve early level in listening and talking and writing and most achieve early level reading. By the end of P4, most children achieve first level in listening and talking, reading and writing. By the end of P7, almost all children achieve second level listening and talking and the majority achieve second level in reading and writing. A few children at most stages across the school exceed minimum expectations for their stage of development.
- The school's approaches to raising attainment in numeracy and mathematics are resulting in most children making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Almost all children achieve early level by the end of P1, most achieve first level by the end of P4 and the majority achieve second level by the end of P7. A few children exceed these levels at all stages.
- It should be noted that within the P7 cohort, there is a high percentage of children identified as requiring additional support with their learning. Teaching staff and children use Individual Learning Records (ILRs) to set targets for improvement. They discuss these together to reflect on progress and plan next steps. For example, children are encouraged to peer teach to demonstrate their understanding, as well as applying their skills across the curriculum. As a result of this thorough tracking of individual children's progress, gaps in children's learning are identified and addressed as part of the school's targeted approach to raising attainment. For example, P1 children follow a Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) approach allowing children to solve problems. Overall, children who require additional support with their learning make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment.
- Standardised assessment results reflect teachers' professional judgements and on-going assessments. Staff should continue to challenge and support all children to continue to raise attainment.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress in listening and talking, reading and writing from their prior levels of attainment. Those children who are not yet reaching minimum national standards are making very good progress towards their individual targets.



## **Listening and Talking**

- Across the school, children demonstrate and apply very strong skills in listening and talking across their learning. In almost all lessons, children confidently discuss their learning and articulate their thoughts and views. Almost all children listen well to their teachers. Their skills in effectively interacting with each other have been developed through regular opportunities to work together and through a focus on communicating effectively as part of their skills for work progression.
- Within early level, almost all children listen appropriately to follow instructions and answer questions. Children are gaining confidence in expressing their feelings with their peers. As they progress in their learning, children demonstrate effective turn taking skills and can respond appropriately to the views of others. By P4, children can confidently discuss key aspects to texts and can ask and answer questions. By the end of P7, children can confidently ask and answers a range of literacy, inferential and evaluative questions. They can effectively build on the contributions of others and can recognise specific techniques to use to influence their arguments during debates.

## **Reading**

- Inspiring children to have a love of reading has been a key aspect of the school's strategy to raising attainment in reading. The school has been very successful in using national initiatives to develop enthusiasm and excitement for reading across the school. Of particular note is the development of the library. This inspiring space is now used on a daily basis by the school. Provision is also made for members of the community to use the library on a weekly basis to promote inter-generational reading. The 'Rocking Readers' club which runs each day in the library for groups of children across the school is well attended and provides very good opportunities for children to read for enjoyment. The planned support for parents on how to support reading at home, and involvement of authors and storytellers to inspire children in their reading, has resulted in a positive reading culture. These achievements were recognised nationally when the school was awarded the 'First Minister's Reading Challenge School Community Partnership Award'.
- Across the school children regularly engage in critical and creative thinking about what they are reading. At the early level, children are developing their confidence in recognising common words in texts. They use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words and can talk about what they are reading. There is clear and measurable impact of the targeted phonics interventions within P1 and P2. As children progress in their learning, they access a wider range of texts and can use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. By the end of P4, children can discuss the key features of texts and can share their understanding of the main ideas in a text. By the end of P7, children read a wide range of texts for different purposes. They can apply a range of skills to understand texts and identify the purpose and main ideas. Most children are confident in discussing techniques the author uses to influence the reader.

## **Writing**

- Children across the school write in a range of genres within their writing lessons and across the curriculum. There are a few children at most stages across the school who are very skilled in using vocabulary and sentence structure to engage their reader. By the end of P1, almost all children are able to use their knowledge of sounds to spell common words correctly. They are developing their skills in writing a sentence and most can join two simple ideas in a sentence. As they progress in their learning, children are using a wider range of vocabulary to create their texts and are developing their use of different sentence



openers. By P4, most children can plan and organise their ideas well and use their plan to structure their writing. They use literary conventions such as similes, to add detail to their writing. By P7, the majority of children can write in a fluent and legible way, making use of a range of literary conventions to engage their reader. The focus on developing vocabulary throughout the school can be seen through reading children's work. The school should continue with their plans to develop further approaches to raising attainment in writing next session. As planned, this work should focus on improving the technical accuracy of written work.

### **Numeracy and Mathematics**

- The school identifies mathematics and numeracy as an area for further improvement and has implemented new progression pathways across early to third level. These include key learning foci across each stage with a planned pace of learning. There is no ceiling set on progression and individuals and groups track their set targets through their ILRs. A focus on assessments, including on-going assessments and baseline assessments at the start and end of each session along with tracking of individuals' progress, helps to identify gaps in learning. Gaps are addressed through specific, focused interventions. All staff now focus on mental agility strategies and are working towards speed of recall. Children demonstrate their understanding through 'close-ups' where they note their reflections and knowledge of a concept.
- Across the school, children demonstrate confidence in number use and explain strategies in calculations. By the end of P1, children are able to transfer their knowledge of number to money and work out change from 10p and 20p. By the end of P3, children are confident in subtraction and use a variety of strategies to help them. By the end of P4, children challenge themselves to add 3 digits to multiples of 10 and add three sets of 3 digit numbers using strategies of partitioning, doubles and doubles +1. Children working in second level demonstrate confidence in a range of number concepts including the use of multiples, factors, decimals and percentages and use their knowledge of the Fibonacci spirals to find examples in nature during outdoor learning. The school now needs to take further cognisance of where children are in their learning at times of transition, particularly from nursery to P1 in order to build on the children's knowledge and skills and to ensure pace of learning is pitched correctly.
- Children working in early level are able to analyse data and produce pictographs. They are confident in naming and recognising 2D shapes and 3D objects. At the second level, children are confidently using tally marks to collect data. They would further benefit from transferring and extending their skills using digital technology and evidencing their understanding through a wider range of graphs. Older children can identify 3D objects from their nets and are able to measure using centimetres and millimetres. They are confident in the concept of probability and chance. Due to the focus on skills and CGI, problem-solving is strong across the school, with children able to use a variety of strategies

### **Attainment over time:**

- Attainment over time is tracked through regular attainment meetings. These in-depth meetings track individual children's progress including progress over time using evidence from standardised test results and teacher professional judgement. The senior leadership team interrogate the data and have introduced interventions to ensure children make year on year progress.

- A robust procedure is in place to monitor and track the progress of children on staged intervention, this includes the voice of the parent and the child. The school looks at the child in a holistic manner and considers the main barrier to learning. Targets are set, interventions put in place and reviewed for impact twice a year. This work would be further supported by analysing a range of data for different cohorts of children across the school.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement:**

- Children's achievements across the school are very strong. There is a clear focus on all children developing skills for life and work. Almost all children are able to articulate the skills they are developing and how they relate to work and real-life contexts. Most children have opportunities for leadership within the school through various groups. They are able to reflect on their achievements through achievement afternoons timetabled for every class. Children in P7 are very proud of their achievements in the 'jobs' they have in the school. These include junior janitors who help keep the school looking good, tech teams who assist the head teacher with all technology during assemblies, the AP gang who work with the children in the Autism Provision to raise money for resources and help everyone feel safe in play. These experiences help children in the upper school demonstrate their skills in leadership, literacy and numeracy and develop a community spirit. They are clear that these opportunities reflect their school vision to be the best they can be. Children in P5 and P6 have shown initiative and have now created their own 'jobs' within the school in order to build on developing their skills and achievements. Attendance at clubs in and outside school are tracked and children, staff and parents are able to nominate children for recognition when they have achieved success or developed a new skill as part of their wider achievements.
- Children's skills are developing well and are demonstrated in interdisciplinary learning and in almost all class lessons throughout the school. Children access physical education and receive the recommended two hours entitlement. Children are consulted on school improvement. They create their own plans to improve the school and evaluate their successes at regular meetings. Children's rights are evidenced in the school ethos and children are developing a positive mind set about their learning.
- Across the school, children are developing the skills and attributes of the four capacities very well. Their confidence and leadership skills are being utilised effectively through the Senior Sevens, where all children in P7 have a role in improving their school and local community. Children in other stages in the school also diligently take on leadership roles through peer mediators, and serving on one of the whole school groups or committees. Amongst children, there is an ethos of teaching their skills to others and many examples of older children leading clubs or activities for their younger peers. Reading reps are highly motivated to encourage a love of reading amongst their peers through taking part in the First Minister's Reading Challenge.
- Children's achievements are effectively shared and celebrated through a variety of ways including at regular assemblies, social media, local press, school newsletters and displays.
- The school provides a very impressive range of out-of-class clubs to extend children's skills and interests in a variety of activities. Participation in these activities is high, and an effective tracking system identifies those at risk of missing out and targets them appropriately. This approach has been successful for many children. The twice per year recording of children's achievements both within school and out-with school could be

extended to look at the range of skills children are gaining from these activities and identify gaps.

### **Equity for all learners**

- The school has a clear focus on providing equity for all learners. Staff identify children who require support to overcome barriers. They are beginning to track progression and the involvement of specific groups of learners. Children throughout the school are encouraged to have a growth mindset enabling all to believe that they can be successful. Family engagement is a focus for the school currently through the Better in Numbers programme, where learning strategies are shared with parents. Next session through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), specific children with a variety of barriers to learning will be supported to achieve in literacy and health and wellbeing. The school's family learning initiatives are strong and are an example of good practice.

### 3.3 Creativity and employability

This indicator focuses on a range of significant skills for learning, life and work which children and young people should increasingly be able to demonstrate as they move through their learning pathways. A key feature is learners' ability to apply their skills in a range of contexts, including in unfamiliar settings. Learners understand the importance of these skills to their future lives and to local, national and global economies.

- *Creativity skills*
- *Digital innovation*
- *Digital literacy*
- *Increasing employability*

#### **Creativity skills**

- Creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation are embedded across learning. Teachers design creative learning opportunities for children to motivate and inspire them and seek many opportunities to enhance children's learning through effective partnership working. Local business partners value their work with the school and recognise the impact of their work on children's learning.
- Teachers show creativity in leading activities in the wider school and community. This enriches children's learning, builds a sense of community in the school, and raises the profile of the school in the community. Recent work includes the redesign of the school library with central library staff and parents, and close working with staff from a local art gallery and museum to promote and host a very successful art exhibition.
- Learners are confident and ambitious. They are empowered by being able to lead their own learning in classes and they involve themselves successfully in a range of activities outwith class. They articulate their thoughts and interests well. Supported by their commitment to the school's vision and values, as well as their learning linked to critical skills, children explore and challenge assumptions naturally. They are respectful to one another and they embrace diversity. The headteacher supports and promotes children's learning in this area, working with staff relentlessly to ensure that inclusion underpins the life of the school. Most recently, a number of books have been bought for the school library which challenge gender-stereotyping and promote the importance of diversity and the growth of an international mind-set.

#### **Digital innovation**

- Children at all stages work individually and in teams to solve problems and they use a range of strategies well to deepen and extend their learning. They would benefit now from using digital technologies more consistently to devise alternative solutions and develop their thinking skills further, for example building on work which has begun with 'Coding Kiddos'. The autism provision is already providing opportunities for children to develop their coding skills.

#### **Digital literacy**

- Children continue to develop their use of digital literacy skills to benefit their learning. They are developing skills in word processing, research and photography, and they use digital technologies increasingly to stimulate, facilitate and collate their work. Good examples of the use of digital technologies were observed with learners using tablets and sound boxes effectively.

- In a few classes, children's learning is enhanced by teachers' creative use of digital applications. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the school and there is scope for it to be developed as part of the school's continued drive to improve its practice in relation to digital literacy.
- Children and their parents receive regular information and advice from the school and its partners on how to stay safe online. Children receive input through classwork and during assemblies.

### **Increasing employability**

- There are major strengths in this aspect of the school's work. Skills for learning, life and work are given a key focus in the school and are embedded creatively into teaching and learning at all stages, including the nursery.
- A skills progression framework, which focuses on employability skills, is used by all teachers to plan and promote specific learning experiences for children. These experiences play an important role in interdisciplinary challenge activities. Teachers articulate well the benefits of developing these skills, and they assess children's work using a range of strategies. The next step for them will be to track and monitor these skills more effectively for all children. Children speak very positively about the importance of these skills in preparing them for the world of work, and display high levels of understanding, maturity and ambition.
- Children's skills are also developed through a wide range of out-of-class activities and leadership opportunities. These include enabling children in P6 to become peer mediators in the playground, P7 children to become house captains, junior janitors and members of the AP gang, and children in P6 and P7 to become buddies. Staff are proactive in providing opportunities for children to develop skills which help them to think about and prepare for their future employment.
- The school works very effectively with parents and a wide range of business partners to plan and provide inspiring and informative careers input for all children at various stages in the school year. A successful 'World of Work' focus week was also held recently, which was well-supported and enhanced by parents and partners. They talked about careers and interacted well with children to provide them with experiences linked to recruitment.
- Senior leaders also provide regular professional learning for staff, linked to the Career Education Standard. This is welcomed by staff, providing them with strategies to enable them to engage in skills-based teaching more consistently and with confidence. Support has also been provided for parents to explain how the Standard impacts on their children's learning.

## Quality of provision of Special Unit (contributes to school evaluations)

### Context

Riverside Primary School has an autism provision for children who have a language and communication disorder and are on the autistic spectrum. There are five classes in the autism provision (AP). Whenever possible and appropriate, the children are included in mainstream classes and can be supported by teaching staff and support for learning assistants.

### Leadership of change

- There is an aspirational vision for children in the AP which is shared by AP staff and by senior managers. Senior managers clearly believe that the vision, values and aims of the school relate to all children, including those who are placed in the AP.
- AP staff feel extremely well supported by their acting principal teacher (PT) and by the wider senior leadership team. They are encouraged to reflect on their practice and to make the best possible provision for children in the AP who have complex and challenging additional support needs. AP staff have a range of ways in which they carry out professional dialogue with each other, both formally and informally. Staff also consult and communicate regularly with parents and carers.
- AP staff's reflection on their practice is supported by regular class observations by the PT. These are carefully recorded with agreed next steps which are followed up at the next observation. The school also has productive links with other specialist provisions through the Specialist Improvement Partnership which includes Bannockburn Primary School, Wallace High School, St Modan's High School and New Struan School.

### Learning, teaching and assessment

- Learners' experiences in AP classes are very well planned by teachers to meet the needs of the children. Children have a number of opportunities to choose activities during their learning. Many of their experiences are based around health and wellbeing and these are helping them to develop skills for learning, life and work. Sensory experiences also form a significant part of the curriculum.
- Teachers use very creative approaches to engage children in their learning and to meet their varying needs in lessons. This often includes the use of digital technology, particularly the interactive whiteboard. Of necessity, instructions and explanations given to children by staff are clear and unambiguous. Questioning is used very skilfully to promote and reinforce understanding, and to reduce anxieties which some children are prone to. AP staff have a wide repertoire of effective interventions which they use flexibly, depending upon the situation.
- Where possible, children are involved in the planning of the curriculum. This can range from suggesting topics of study to reflecting on what they know about a subject and agreeing what they would like to find out. They contribute effectively to this approach.
- AP staff use a range of very effective assessment approaches to demonstrate children's progress in their learning. The evidence of progression in learning is shared with parents and carers. Parents appreciate the regular information about progress that they receive.



They also note the improvement in their children's use of coping strategies for change and for dealing with emotions.

- AP staff plan learning well for children across a range of aspects of the curriculum. There is an emphasis on health and wellbeing, but staff also carefully track the progress of children's skills in literacy and numeracy. There is a wide range of approaches to tracking the progress of children in the AP. Staff are aware that they now need to plan in a more consistent way across classes, ensuring that bureaucracy is kept to a minimum.
- Every child in the AP is also a member of a mainstream class. Some AP children attend their mainstream classes for particular subjects, where appropriate, although the degree to which this happens varies. Class teachers work very well with learning assistants to support these inclusion opportunities.

### **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**

- AP staff know children and their needs very well. They can demonstrate that children in the AP are making progress in their learning due to their wellbeing needs being met. Relationships between children in the AP and staff are extremely positive. Children in the AP also have positive relationships with children in other classes in the school, whether during their inclusion in learning activities or through clubs such as Rocking Readers.
- AP staff comply with the appropriate statutory requirements and codes of practice, particularly those which relate to additional support needs.
- Staff include all children in activities in the most appropriate way. AP staff are well-trained and experienced, allowing them to be flexible in their response to children's needs. They celebrate diversity and welcome all children equally. They have developed particularly effective strategies for meeting children's complex additional support needs. They organise appropriate learning activities through careful planning and assessment. This planning and assessment is discussed with parents and is formalised in the children's plans, which are updated on a termly basis.
- Staff work very well with other partners to meet children's needs as effectively as possible. These agencies include educational psychology, speech and language therapy and social work. Some parents feel that the reduction in speech and language input, including one-to-one input, has had a detrimental effect on children's progress.

### **Raising attainment and achievement**

- AP staff can demonstrate that individual children are making progress with their literacy and numeracy. They track the skills which children are developing on an ongoing basis. Staff have evidence of children's progress in reading, writing, listening and talking. The progress in literacy and numeracy is individualised due to the wide range of differing needs which children have. In listening and talking, this includes children who were non-verbal and are now talking, and in writing it includes some children who were capable of basic mark-making at the beginning of the session and are now writing in sentences.
- Attainment over time is measured in a number of different ways including through progress with targets in the children's plans. AP staff use individual learning records to track progress in reading, writing, listening and talking, and numeracy.

### **Other information (including Creativity and Employability)**

- Some children in the AP have been involved in the whole-school focus week on World of Work. Guest speakers from different walks of life, including an artist, an archaeologist and a journalist, were invited to talk to the children, focusing on the key skills which were needed for their own profession. The Skills for Work progression planner is used to ensure that children are making appropriate progress. Children are being helped to make appropriate choices based on their skills, strengths and preferences. AP staff are working with children to help them to become more flexible and resilient, and to cope more effectively with transitions.
- Children in AP are involved in enterprise activities which relate to the world of work. These include the 'Candygram' programme and the regular café, run monthly in the school. Children are involved in a number of aspects of this including shopping, preparing food and serving it to customers. They are developing career-related skills as a result of these activities. The AP is also working very well with the wider community, including the local library and care home, to extend the learning experiences of children. AP staff would now like to develop these partnerships and add to them.
- AP staff offer a commendably broad range of learning experiences for children across the curriculum. For example, children are progressing well in conversational French, Art, Science, Music and horticulture. These classes are almost always organised in an innovative and engaging way for children and differentiated to meet their individual needs.
- Overall, parents are very impressed by the AP and by the work of the wider school. They feel that there is an extremely inclusive ethos within the school which is encouraged and led by the headteacher and the principal teacher. They think the headteacher knows all of the children well. They particularly appreciate the role of the AP Gang, where a small group of P7 pupils befriend and play with AP children, and feel that the members of this group are excellent role models for the rest of the school. They think that their children are included in mainstream classes where appropriate and are aware that the degree of this varies from pupil to pupil. They are kept well-informed by AP staff about the education of their child and know that they can approach individual class teachers with queries. They would like the pilot project for electronic updates, which includes video clips of class activities, to be extended. They would also like to see the proposed after-school learning opportunities for parents take place.



## Quality of provision of Gaelic Medium Education (contributes to school evaluations)

### Context

- Riverside PS provides Gaelic Medium Education for Stirling Council, as well as for Clackmannanshire Council and Falkirk Council.

### Leadership of change

- The headteacher is very effective in her leadership of Gaelic Medium Education (GME). She is very committed to the continuous improvement of GME. The uptake in the current P1 represents a healthy increase of interest in GME. The headteacher also takes a lead in driving forward GME within the local authority.
- The acting principal teacher is leading change effectively, with new staff also beginning to contribute very well. Staff receive and respond to very helpful feedback on learning and children's progress and attainment from the headteacher. As a team, they have a very clear vision for GME's continuous improvement. The school should continue with the plans to increase the acting principal teacher's role in monitoring the Gaelic-specific aspects of children's education.
- The strategic planning for improvement of GME works in tandem with that for English medium education with common improvement projects across mediums of learning. Staff work collaboratively with those in English medium so that children, as appropriate, have similar experiences while respecting mediums of learning. Currently, the focus on improving attainment and embedding skills for work are relevant to all children at Riverside Primary School. Given the new staffing for GME, it would be useful to have an in-depth focus on GME as part of continuous improvement, using key documents such as the Advice on Gaelic Education together with self-evaluation frameworks.
- Children across stages take on different leadership roles. They are confident that views they express on GME will be taken seriously.

### Learning, teaching and assessment

- Children are very happy in their learning which takes place across the totality of the curriculum. They are proud of what they describe as their 'unique' approach to learning which is enabling them to be bilingual citizens. Children, as a group learning through the medium of Gaelic, are well-motivated and show a high level of engagement in activities which are led by themselves or their teacher. They co-create success criteria with their teachers in which they demonstrate an awareness of how to improve their progress. In almost all cases, tasks and activities are well-matched to the needs of children. Children who may need additional assistance with their learning are supported very well in their learning.
- We observed very effective teaching within GME in which teachers used a range of immersion approaches. Teachers' frequent and skilful interactions are in quality Gaelic. There is scope for more consistency in the use of higher-order thinking skills.
- Whilst children are able to articulate their learning intentions and success criteria, there is scope for greater consistency in their further use to assess how well they have learned.

We noted staff's use of oral and written feedback to help inform children of their next steps in learning. The best practice in this should be shared to promote greater consistency.

- Staff are building their skills in continuous assessment, with targeted interventions put in place as required. At an appropriate timing to suit immersion, staff use standardised assessments to support their professional judgements in reading and mathematics. They are beginning to plan how they will use the new national standardised assessments to take account of learning in GME, including when children access literacy and English. Staff create literacy and numeracy assessments, as well as collate a range of evidence to help them make a professional judgement on children's progress and achievement of a level. Teachers would benefit from planning assessment using the recently-published benchmarks and considering how holistic judgements can be made. They should also continue to look at standards across all areas of the curriculum.
- Data is used, along with other evidence of achievement, to monitor and predict children's progress towards expected levels. Children's progress in numeracy and literacy, through Gaelic and English, is tracked through meetings at which a number of intervention strategies are set.

### **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**

The headteacher has greatly improved the way that Gaelic is valued within the school, with GME recognised as part of the school's unique context. Children feel that they are treated fairly and with respect. They enjoy positive relationships with their peers and staff. This underpins their confidence in learning Gaelic and its use for their learning. Gaelic is increasingly audible and visible within the English medium aspects of whole-school events, such as assembly. For example, the school song has been composed to have verses in both languages.

- Children talk about the Getting it Right for Every Child approach and how this shapes their approach to others. This results in a nurturing environment in which every child receives the support they need in order to progress in their learning.
- There are clear approaches in place to identify needs and ensure appropriate support. Children are supported very effectively by a Gaelic-speaking learning support assistant. She supports all children in class whilst also teaching small groups of those who require targeted support. At other times, as a short-term targeted intervention, children are supported in raising their attainment in numeracy and mathematics through English medium. It would be important to review the factors that have led to the need for interventions and ascertain how the GME curriculum could be adjusted to raise attainment, and support interventions through the medium of Gaelic. Staff would benefit from extending their use of total immersion as an intervention, which in itself would build children's language skills to be accessing the curriculum for GME.
- Practitioners are considering statutory requirements for GME as they take forward their provision.

### **Securing children's progress; raising attainment and achievement**

- Overall, children are making mainly good progress in GME with scope for improvement. The school has now secured specialist staff which will result in more continuity in learning through Gaelic, with its resultant impact on attainment. Staff are increasingly confident in scrutinising and analysing attainment data and using it to inform their professional

judgement on individual pupil progress. In analysing whole-school data, account should be taken of the distinctive way that children learn in GME. The school reports that almost all of the children are attaining across stages in listening and talking. For reading, across levels most children are attaining expected levels. Largely due to staffing issues, only the majority of children are attaining the expected level in writing. Staff should continue to challenge and support all children to reach expected levels of attainment. In English language and numeracy, children are attaining as well as their peers in English medium education. Inspectors agreed with the school that predictions for achievement of a level would be strengthened through stronger approaches to moderation.

- The children in the nursery are able to understand and use Gaelic from topics such as colours and numbers. Outwith their group time for Gaelic, we observed children to be independently applying the Gaelic that they have learned. Children would benefit from more challenge to their learning of Gaelic. As children continue with the early level at P1 they benefit from total immersion. In this, all children understand continuous use of the language with most of them responding in many situations through the medium of Gaelic. Most children initiate communication in the medium of Gaelic. Across stages, children listen very well to each other and to their teachers. They are confident in talking. Children are able to express their own opinions clearly and, by P7, build on the contributions of others. It would be useful to deploy more age- and stage-appropriate strategies to help children to improve further their grammatical accuracy, which could usefully be incorporated into setting targets for improvement. At the older stages, a next stage would be to develop clear strategies for supporting children with building Gaelic vocabulary to reduce their usage of English vocabulary in some of their Gaelic communication.
- Staff have an effective focus on refreshing the strategies they use for developing skills in reading. Children who have not benefitted from these approaches are receiving, as required, some targeted interventions. As a result, children are clearer on sounds and how this links to the written word. Children enjoy reading, through both mediums. They are becoming more confident in talking about the writer's craft. The school has plans to strengthen this further.
- At the early and first levels, children are making a very good start to writing. Across stages, children are aware of the criteria they need to use to improve their writing. At the older stages, writing should be more regular with a balance in the use of both mediums. Children should be encouraged to set themselves higher expectations of standards of presentation.
- Children have opportunities for achievements to help develop their Gaelic language skills, as well as make connections to culture and heritage through their participation in the Stirling and National Mòds.

### **Parental Engagement**

- Parents are positive about their engagement with the school. At the early stages, parents receive very useful information on what children are learning which has the potential to foster their engagement with their children's education. Information to support children with reading is available on the website. When confident about staffing for GME, the school has increased their promotion of Gaelic, which has resulted in an increased uptake for GME. The useful information being provided on GME could be more linked to the benefits of bilingualism.

## Learning Pathways

- As the school continues to develop their curriculum rationale, they should consider immersion as being a key driver in their GME pathways and also how this may influence learning for those in English medium. The headteacher monitors the extent to which the curriculum is delivered through Gaelic. Now that there is stable staffing at the primary stages, it would be useful to revisit the approaches to immersion to ensure that these are maximised.
- In the nursery, parents may opt for their children to have a Gaelic input. Currently, the majority of children are taking part in this. Given this interest, this may be an appropriate time to look at how well progression and continuity is provided to this learning of Gaelic as an additional language.
- Currently, GME commences in P1. Recognising the gains from early language learning, and the interest in Gaelic (Learners) in the nursery, the school should look at ways of improving continuity and progression with GME from the nursery into the primary stages. They should also consider this as part of their strategy for raising attainment in GME, closing the gap in attainment and the delivery of progressive, high-quality GME.
- Progress in literacy and Gàidhlig should be defined as a progressive pathway which links to the planned learning at the secondary stages. This should be linked to embedding GME within the school so that the curriculum is always viewed as to how well it is meeting the needs of GME as a cohort of learners. For example, we found that the development of employability skills may have been more pertinent to GME.
- The headteacher has taken useful steps to support her staff in reducing bureaucracy. In this respect, she should continue to work with Gaelic organisations so as to be ensuring that teachers are freed up for learning and teaching.

## Summarised Inspection Findings - NURSERY

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment -

**excellent**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- *Learning and engagement*
  - *Quality of teaching*
  - *Effective use of assessment*
  - *Planning, tracking and monitoring*
- Across the morning and afternoon sessions, children are secure, happy, creative and very settled in the stimulating and highly effective play environment. They are very active in their learning. All children can confidently choose from an extensive range of toys, resources and carefully planned activities which encourage their curiosity and problem-solving skills. Children approach their learning enthusiastically and almost all can concentrate particularly well on their chosen activities for extended periods. All children play very well independently and are learning important skills to play and cooperate well together in pairs and small groups. For example, without adult support or prompting, during their play in the outdoor area, a group of children organised themselves as a team in order to devise a way to retrieve a ball from a tree.
  - Children have a genuine sense of ownership of their individual learning folders which document extremely well their progress in learning, next steps and many achievements, including improvements at home. As a result of this highly successful approach, children have a sound awareness of their strengths as learners; have an excellent recall of their prior learning; are very highly motivated; and are clearly involved in directing their own learning. Children have a real voice in the life of their nursery and are involved in decision making in many meaningful ways. For example, they vote for the context of the imaginative play area on the mezzanine floor. Staff also frequently ask children for their views on different aspects of their nursery experience, including on new resources and what they would like for their snack. The focus on developing children's listening and talking skills is clearly helping them to understand that their opinions count.
  - Children's experiences are enriched through daily opportunities to learn and play outdoors. They benefit from the chance to take all aspects of their learning outdoors, such as art, music, and science, as well as early language and mathematics. They make very good use of their 'sand kitchen' and use their imaginations and creativity to invent their own 'sand' dinners.
  - Children can use a range of digital technologies very confidently. They independently use the computer, tablet and interactive whiteboard to type letters and numbers and to play games. They can take their own photos using digital cameras and use programmable toys well.
  - Practitioners have a sound understanding of each child's needs, both as learners and as individuals. As a result, they are responsive and sensitive in how they meet the needs of

all children and their families. They have a nurturing, positive and very caring approach whilst supporting, challenging and enriching children's learning at every opportunity. They question and challenge children skilfully in order to extend and support their learning. This results in consistently very high-quality interactions that extend children's learning and knowledge. Over a number of years, practitioners have embedded consistently well the use of Bloom's Taxonomy across all aspects of the playroom and across children's wider nursery experiences. As a result, children's higher-order thinking, reasoning and communication skills are exceptionally well developed. Commendably, practitioners will often revisit children's learning along with them, using Bloom's Taxonomy to deepen children's understanding, curiosity and creativity.

- Practitioners work seamlessly together to support all children to make the best progress they are capable of. They have developed robust systems to ensure that individual children's next steps in learning are identified. This information, in the form of bespoke targets for each child, is then very clearly linked to planned learning. Staff record meticulously key information that helps them best support children and to track any concerns they may have. Staff use a range of effective strategies to support and challenge children in their learning. This includes providing targeted support for literacy and numeracy in small groups. They also proactively seek advice from specialist agencies wherever necessary.
- Practitioners have weekly planning meetings to discuss the progress children are making in their learning. In addition, they meet with colleagues in the early years primary classes on a regular basis to ensure there is a shared understanding of the standards of children's learning and that there is a common use of language and teaching techniques across the school to best support children in their learning. Across the year, parents have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress. For example, at parent meetings and open days; through looking at their child's learning folder; in written reports, and in daily discussions with practitioners.



## 2.2 Curriculum: theme 2: Learning Pathways and Development Pathways

- Practitioners skilfully use children's individual and collective interests as the main driver for planning learning. They make very well-planned use of the different environments available to them to provide a varied experience for children, in line with their different interests and stages of development. Their astute observations and monitoring of children at play and sensitive interventions helps to ensure that all children experience a breadth of learning in their chosen activities.
- Practitioners make confident and highly effective use of the design principles and experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to plan children's learning. Commendably, they have developed a framework for their planning which allows for all children, including high-achieving children, to make the best progress possible. As a result, all children benefit from exciting, challenging and highly relevant learning experiences. Specialist teachers of music and physical education add value to children's nursery experiences.
- Nursery practitioners have a clear focus on ensuring that literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing have a high priority in their planning. In addition, the whole-school priority to develop children's skills for learning, life and work is being fully embraced within the nursery. This is evident in practitioners' planning, in the activities they offer which promote children's creativity and independence, and in the skilful way they intervene to extend and support children during their learning.
- Arrangements for children making the transition from home to starting nursery are comprehensive and tailored to the needs of each child. Nursery practitioners proactively seek the views of parents in order to keep their approaches to transition under review and effective. Children in the pre-school year benefit from a fulsome and very supportive programme of activities which aids their transition to P1. The very close links and professional dialogue between nursery and the P1 staff provide meaningful opportunities for shared and reciprocal learning to take place across the school year, as well as for the important transfer of information about children's learning. Commendably, children continue to use their individual learning folder when they move from nursery to P1. This helps to ensure that children's prior learning is taken into account and built upon at this important transition point.

## 2.7 Partnerships: theme 3: Impact on children and families

- The setting has strong links with parents. Practitioners use a wide range of communication methods to keep parents informed about the life of the setting. They are considering different ways of communicating to ensure that working parents are also kept fully informed. Parents are involved in the self-evaluation of the setting and many of their suggestions have been implemented. For example, clearly signposting the section for nursery in the school's newsletter. Parents have visited the setting to share their working roles which has allowed the children to learn about different roles and responsibilities in the workplace. Commendably, practitioners have ensured that gender stereotypes are not reinforced by these visits. Previously, practitioners offered parents a range of workshops to offer them support and information. The setting should continue with their plans to offer these workshops. Parents spoken to as part of the inspection felt very welcomed and supported by practitioners.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator reflects on the setting's or school's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
- *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
- *Inclusion and equality*

- There are very strong caring relationships in the setting, enhanced by the embedded nurturing ethos. This leads to a very strong foundation which improves outcomes for children and their families. For practitioners, the wellbeing of children is paramount. Practitioners know each child very well and are very attuned to their needs. They have an extremely good theoretical and practical understanding of the importance of nurture, bonding and wellbeing of young children. They speak and listen to children in an inclusive way which helps them to feel valued and included. Practitioners provide very positive role models to children promoting positive behaviour. They have regular discussions with children to agree what positive behaviour they would like in the setting and how they would like to be treated by others. If there is a problem in the setting children are encouraged to think about how they can fix the problem which encourages a positive mind-set. Practitioners consult children extremely effectively in making decisions which affect them. Children from the setting were involved in discussing the school improvement plans ensuring that their voices were heard.
- Practitioners have a very good shared understanding of wellbeing which supports family's social and emotional wellbeing. However, they now need to continue to support parents and young children to develop an awareness of what it means to feel safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included. They should also continue to encourage the children to be aware of their rights by promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This could be implemented in conjunction with the continuing development of the wellbeing indicators.
- Practitioners actively engage and comply with statutory duties. They then use all their skills and knowledge to ensure all children's needs are very well met. Where children have additional support needs, practitioners are extremely proactive in seeking appropriate help at an early stage from other agencies. The children are then very well supported. There are robust individual plans in place for children with additional support needs which are reviewed and monitored effectively. Practitioners incorporate any suggestions from professionals into this planning in order to ensure that the children receive robust targeted support. Practitioners seek relevant professional development opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge to ensure they continue to support all children extremely well.
- Inclusion and equality is promoted throughout the work of the setting including a strong focus on gender equality. Practitioners have a clear understanding of the families that attend the setting and how this influences the work they do. As discussed, practitioners

should continue to plan appropriate parental groups to improve outcomes for children. Parents are encouraged to share festivals and celebrations.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

excellent

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- *Progress in communication, early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing*
- *Children's progress over time*
- *Overall quality of children's achievement*
- *Ensuring equity for all children*

- In early language and communication almost all children are making excellent progress. Almost all children are developing their language well. Children with English as an additional language receive targeted support which is having a positive impact on their language. In partnership with the speech and language therapist, a project to improve listening and talking has been implemented. This has led to practitioners becoming more skilled in delivering listening and talking activities which in turn has increased these skills in the children. A progression framework for listening and talking ensures that children are sufficiently challenged to make the best possible progress. Children enjoy looking at appropriate books, recall favourite stories and make their own books. They borrow favourite books from the book library to take home. As discussed, it would be useful for the children to review these books using a simple paper format. Practitioners are very skilled at incorporating rhyme and songs in the setting. At the end of each term there is a parental rhyme event, explaining the importance of rhyme and demonstrating the use of rhyme with the children. Children enjoy mark making in a range of different contexts and explore environmental print well. For example, stop signs. Most children recognise their name in print and can write their name and numbers.
- In numeracy and maths almost all children are making excellent progress. Throughout the setting they are using these skills extremely effectively in their play. For example, when putting candles on a cake they can quickly tell you the number left if they add or count back candles. Most children are confident in their use of larger numbers. They are learning the value of money through real life experience such as selling the herbs, which they have grown, to parents and other adults. They also order the food for their snack online which encourages their digital skills as well. They are constantly using mathematical language when they measure their constructions and the different size of different metal pipes in the outdoor area.
- There is a strong focus on health and wellbeing within the setting, and as a result children are making excellent progress in developing a range of skills. Building on their nurturing training, practitioners are extremely skilled in encouraging children to engage in a range of different activities. There is a focus on kindness this term with the kindness elves 'Poppy' and 'Sparkly' reporting on acts of kindness by the children. Children risk assess their play and understand how to keep safe while playing inside, outside and on community walks. Almost all children understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating in keeping

strong and helping the body grow. They choose and shop for healthy snacks and are independent in their self-care routines. Children are developing skills in gross and fine motor control through a wide range of interesting experiences such as using real tools to build models, climbing trees and swinging on the rope swing. Children are learning about sustainability during their activities around the Eco-Schools programme awards. They are finding out about ways to improve their environment.

- Within the setting children are making excellent progress across all aspects of learning and development over time. They benefit from a wide range of high quality experiences. Practitioners make sound professional judgements about children's progress and how children are learning and developing using a range of robust, frequent observations. They assess children at regular intervals and each child has an individual learning record. Children receive individual targeted support to ensure they are making the best possible progress. For the most able children a progression framework is used to ensure that they are challenged in their learning. Children's personal achievements are displayed in their learning folder. Practitioners should continue to look for opportunities to ensure that both children and parents know their individual targets and celebrate them when they are achieved.

## Particular strengths of the school

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher which ensures that Riverside Primary School works as one strong community serving to do the very best for all the children. Staff have high expectations of themselves and children and this contributes strongly to a climate of aspiration and ambition.
- Across the school children are motivated, engaged and actively involved in their learning and improving the work of the school. They work very well with their teachers and each other to evaluate their own progress and identify their next steps for improvement. They provide strong support for each other across this inclusive school community.
- The values of respect, fairness, honesty and kindness are completely embedded with integrity and authenticity across the life and work of the school. Staff and partners consistently and persistently apply positive approaches to Getting it Right for Every Child. As a result, they have very successfully created a community where the children themselves are very often the key leaders of ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion within their school.
- The very successful approaches to motivating children to have a love of reading through engaging learning and teaching and the development of the inspiring library. Staff and children work effectively with members of the community to ensure the library can also be used by members of the community to support inter-generational reading.
- The shared professional learning of practitioners in the nursery. This is leading to outstanding learning and teaching which is supporting children to make excellent progress.
- The inclusive and respectful approach to Gaelic developed by the headteacher as an important feature of the school.
- The outstanding provision made for children with autism.
- The key focus which the school places on embedding the skills for learning, life and work creatively into teaching and learning at all stages. Children show high levels of understanding, maturity and ambition when speaking about their learning linked to these skills. They recognise this prepares them well for the world of work.

- The development of children’s skills through a wide range of out-of-class activities and leadership opportunities.

### **Agreed areas for improvement for the school**

- Continue to implement developments identified in the school improvement plan. This includes plans to develop further approaches to moderation and to raise attainment, particularly in numeracy and writing.
- Continue to build on the successes of Gaelic across the school. This includes embedding further national advice on immersion for 3-12 Gaelic Medium Education.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91% – 99%
Most	75% – 90%
Majority	50% – 74%
Minority/Less than half	15 – 49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

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